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15 October 1958

NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Trip Report to Atlantic Missile Test Center

1. On 9 October 1958 [redacted] and the undersigned proceeded to the Atlantic Missile Test Center at Cocoa Beach, Florida, to observe the lunar probe shot scheduled for 11 October 1958. Cocoa Beach, Florida, is located approximately 80 miles from Orlando on a large sand bar or reef connected to the mainland of Florida by a causeway across the Banana River, a part of the inland waterway. Patrick AFB is located at the south end of this sand bar with Cape Canaveral located on the north end of the sand bar about 20 miles distant from Patrick AFB.
2. The group arrived at Cocoa Beach in the afternoon of 9 October but was unable to contact Col. Mathison, RMD representative from California, until the morning of 10 October. At that time Col. Mathison introduced the group to Lt. Col. Wright who acted as the escort on a tour of the Test Center.
3. Col. Wright first explained that Patrick AFB was more or less the housekeeping base for the Test Center while Cape Canaveral was the actual test range. To familiarize the party with past tests and the preparation for the lunar shot, Col. Wright gave a very thorough briefing with the aid of color slides and movies on past launchings and the make-up of the lunar vehicle. It was explained that the lunar vehicle was a four stage vehicle with a small satellite equipped with an ionization chamber for radiation measurement and a crude television camera for television relay pictures of the back side of the moon. The first stage of the rocket is a Thor missile. Mounted on the Thor is a modified Vanguard second stage missile topped by a solid fuel third stage missile. After third stage burn out, the remaining satellite is given its final guidance by a ring of vernier rockets that correct the path of the package at that point. As the package enters the gravitational influence of the moon, about 2.6 days from the earth, the fourth stage or retrorocket is fired to slow down the satellite and enable it to go into orbit.
4. On the afternoon of 10 October Col. Wright conducted a tour of the Cape Canaveral site. He first explained that the Cape was broken

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down into the test areas and the industrial area. The industrial area contains hangar and workshop space for all the contractors interested in the various missiles tested at the site. The Central Control building is also located in the industrial area and acts as the nerve center of all test operations. Reports are received at this point from the many land tracking stations and ships down range as far as Ascension Island, which is located in the Atlantic about midway between South America and Africa. The flight of the missile is monitored from Central Control by the range safety officer who is prepared to destroy the missile the minute its course deviation endangers any land mass.

5. The test sites at the Cape are numerous with launch pads for test of the Thor, Atlas, Titan, Polaris, Shark, Vanguard, Navaho and Jupiter missiles. Each test pad and each hangar area in the industrial area is surrounded with a cyclone fence and guarded by a guard at the gate of the fence and one at the pad, or work area. Personnel movement is restricted by use of a badge system.

6. Guard services, as well as all other housekeeping services, are provided by Pan American Airlines which is under contract to the Air Force for these services as well as the services provided at the down range tracking stations. The guards are very alert and security control appears to be very good.

7. On the night of the launch the party proceeded first to the launch pad for a last minute look at the lunar vehicle. Although maximum security procedures were in force, it was noted that there was a large number of technicians and Air Force observers at the launch site.

8. After watching the final preparations at the launch site, [redacted] and Col. Mathison proceeded to Central Control to observe the launch while [redacted] and the writer observed the operation from the press bleachers. The bleachers are located about two miles from the launch site. Telephones are available to the press and photography from this point is unrestricted. The press was transported from Patrick AFB directly to the bleachers about an hour before launch time. All press members were badged with a big notation on the badge indicating "Escort Required." The press escorts were members of the PIO staff at Patrick AFB who distributed prepared news releases just after launch. A pre-launch news conference was held on 10 October at which the launch was explained. After all releases and pictures had been distributed, the press members were loaded into buses and taken directly to the

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base theater at Patrick AFB where a press conference was held with Dr. Silverstein of NASA, General O. J. Ritland of BMD, General Yates of the Atlantic Test Site, Dr. Dunn of the Space Technology Laboratory and Dr. Bennett, Chief of Electronics for the lunar probe. The press asked various questions on the probability of success. Members of the interviewed party explained that success could not be accurately predicted until all results were received from tracking sources. A few questions were asked about future projects. The conferees asked to defer any comment on future use of missiles until the results of this flight could be evaluated. General Yates finally closed the conference and explained that all other releases would have to come from Washington.

9. The handling of the security and press relations was very satisfactory for this launch. As was explained earlier, the press was not allowed to observe the missile at close range or roam around the base unescorted. The security and press relations task was made relatively easy at this launch because of the fact that the launch was unclassified. Greater problems are foreseen in CORONA launches. At a CORONA launch, photographs of the different stages could not be passed out unless pictures of a purely instrumented package were made up and handed out prior to the CORONA launch. The latter method would probably be best as the precedent of handing out photos to the press has more or less been set at the Cape. It is also noted that follow-up releases furnished information on radiation measurement and temperature. Scientific information gathered as a result of the "instrumentation package" in a CORONA vehicle should be given out in order to make the press news releases appear like any other scientific type shots. The fact that this shot was completely unclassified and everything could be explained in detail to the press probably was responsible for the lack of speculation on future projects and possibility of other instrumentation in this particular shot.

10. The presence of numerous guards, uses of badge systems and necessity for adherence to various security procedures at Cape Canaveral seem to be unchallenged and treated as a necessary function. Consequently, the establishment of a maximum security atmosphere at Vandenberg AFB should not appear inconsistent with past treatment at missile launch sites. The security system might have a weak link in its treatment of visitors. It was mentioned that occasionally visitors from Washington, whose visits are authorized by the Department of Defense PIO function, are given the "grand tour" of the test site. This type tour could pose security problems. Other problems might arise due to the number of people actually involved in the entire operation. There were quite a few technicians and observers at the launch site just prior to launch time.

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11. Probably one of the biggest security problems that can be expected at Vandenberg AFB was demonstrated at the area surrounding the test site. This problem, which is always present in this type of operation, is the conduct of the workers and other knowledgeable people while they are away from the test site. The technicians, contractor public relations types, Air Force personnel and members of the press seemed to congregate at the Starlite Motel at Cocoa Beach. Discussion at the Starlite usually turns to missile problems which are aired without too much regard for the press representatives within earshot.

12. All members of the visiting party felt that the trip was very interesting and extremely informative as the procedures established at Canaveral should be very similar to those to be used at Vandenberg.

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[Redacted]  
Assistant Cover Officer  
DPS/DCI

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